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Adoption of integrated pest management in small holder vegetable cultivation: A case study of family crusiferacaea crops

W A C P Wanasinghe[1*], M Wijerathna [1]
[1]*Department of Agric. economics, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna*

Badulla District is one of the major vegetable growing areas in Sri Lanka. Most of the farmers in *Badulla,* cultivate three seasons per year. One season for rice, one season for potato and other for vegetables. Excessive use of pesticide creates a number of environmental and health problems in this area. Therefore, integrated pest management (IPM) has been introduced to farmers to minimize pesticide usage. The main objective of this study was to identify the adoption of IPM in small holder vegetable cultivation mainly focused on family crusiferacaea crops. This was done in two major vegetable growing Divisional secretariat divisions (DSD) viz. *Welimada* and *Uva paranagama*. Four G.N. divisions; *Alakolagala, Hinnarangolla, Ranhavadigama* and *Dangolla* where the IPM programmes were implemented during last few years were selected and 17 farmers from each G.N. division were selected using simple random sampling technique.

The results revealed that the agricultural instructors of the provincial department of agriculture were the main extension service in the area. In addition, the pesticide companies were also engaged in doing extension services through their dealers, but it is subjected to benefits of their pesticide usage. Majority of the respondent farmers used pesticide before the initial stage of the pest attacks. They used much higher amount of pesticide than recommended. Nearly 44 % of the farmers have a good knowledge about IPM. Most of the farmers could identify the natural enemies of the crusiferacaea pests. But 47 percent of the farmers had no idea about interaction between pests and their natural enemies. A high proportion of farmers (42.7%) have medium level knowledge about pest control methods. The highest proportion of the respondent farmers (44%) was low adopters of IPM. The relationship between age of the farmer and the adoption of IPM and, also the knowledge of the farmers and adoption of IPM were found to be significant. Eighty three percent of the farmers have poor attitudes towards IPM. They said IPM is not an effective method for control of pests and it is a time wasting method. So improving attitudes will help the farmers to adopt IPM practices. There are no farmer field schools in the selected area. So the farmer field schools approach would be useful to increase the knowledge and attitudes towards IPM. It also helps to share the experience with neighboring farmers.

*chamikawanasinghe@yahoo.com Tel: 055-2229470